United Nations A/71/81

General Assembly

Distr.: General
12 May 2016
English
Original: Russian

Seventy-first session
Agenda item 113 (d) of the preliminary list*
Elections to fill vacancies in subsidiary organs and other elections: election of fourteen members of the Human Rights Council

Letter dated 19 April 2016 from the Permanent Representative of the Russian Federation to the United Nations addressed to the Secretary-General

I have the honour to transmit herewith a position paper in connection with the candidature of the Russian Federation for election to the Human Rights Council for the period 2017-2019 at the elections to be held at the seventy-first session of the General Assembly (see annex).

I should be grateful if you would have this letter and its annex circulated as a document of the seventy-first session of the General Assembly under item 113 (d) of the preliminary list.

(*Signed*) V. **Churkin**

* A/71/50.

16-06869 (E) 160516 180516

Please recycle

Annex to the letter dated 19 April 2016 from the Permanent Representative of the Russian Federation to the United Nations addressed to the Secretary-General

Candidature of the Russian Federation to the Human Rights Council, 2017-2019

Voluntary pledges and commitments pursuant to General Assembly resolution 60/251

1. The Russian Federation was actively involved in the process of establishing the Human Rights Council and made a significant contribution towards conducting the review of the functioning and status of the Council, following the first five years of its work.

2. Russia worked hard to make the Council an efficient and effective tool for promoting and protecting human rights throughout the world during the three terms of its membership in the Council (2006-2009, 2009-2012 and 2013-2016), and during its year-long status as an observer (2013). The Russian Federation intends to take further steps to incorporate in the work of the Council the fundamental principles of universality, non-selectivity, objectivity, equal treatment of all categories of human rights, and respect for diversity of cultures and civilizations. The decision of Russia to present its candidature for election to the Council for the period 2017-2019 stems from the determination to pursue a fair, mutually respectful and equal dialogue on human rights and fundamental freedoms.

3. Russia is firmly attached to such fundamental values as freedom, justice, life, well-being and human dignity, family traditions, political equality, integrity of the court system, responsibility of leadership, social guarantees and the eradication of poverty and corruption. Russia is also firmly committed to its international obligations in the field of human rights. We continue to pursue a policy of further strengthening democracy, the rule of law and respect for human rights and fundamental freedoms. Our efforts at the domestic level are aimed, in particular, at the following:

(a) Giving effect to the social guarantees embodied in the Constitution;

(b) Ensuring the broad participation of citizens, political parties and other social institutions in shaping State policy, including decision-making;

(c) Improving the legal system and promoting integrity of the court system in order to eradicate corruption and ensure the rule of law;

(d) Further expanding economic and entrepreneurial freedom;

(e) Supporting the national traditions and cultures of the peoples of Russia as a principal factor in harmony within society, unity of the nation and stable development of the country.

4. At the international level, we see our tasks as the following:

(a) To achieve respect for human rights and freedoms throughout the world through constructive international dialogue on the basis of the Universal Declaration of Human Rights, to utilize other possibilities in the field of human rights, including at the regional level, and to reject double standards and ensure respect for the

national and historical characteristics of each State in the process of democratic transformations, without imposing borrowed value systems on anyone;

(b) To promote the strengthening of international legality, which is based on compliance by States with their national constitutions and their obligations under international agreements and treaties;

(c) To strongly oppose manifestations of racism, xenophobia, aggressive nationalism, anti-Semitism, religious and ethnic intolerance, neo Nazism and other radical ideologies;

(d) To develop international cultural and humanitarian cooperation, including by utilizing the resources, capacities and initiatives of civil society institutions in the sphere of public diplomacy, as a means of establishing a dialogue among civilizations, achieving harmony and ensuring mutual understanding among peoples while paying special attention to interreligious dialogue;

(e) To enhance cooperation with international and non-governmental human rights organizations in order to strengthen the universal norms of human rights protection, coupling them with the responsibility of individuals for their actions, primarily in terms of preventing offence to the feelings of believers, fostering mutual understanding and respect, and strengthening moral principles in the human rights dialogue;

(f) To expand participation in international human rights conventions and agreements, and to bring the legislation of the Russian Federation into line with them.

5. The Russian Federation is convinced that the standards and principles embodied in the Universal Declaration of Human Rights and in the International Covenants on Human Rights must be consistently implemented throughout the world. In order to attain this objective, all actors on the international scene need to focus their efforts on strengthening dialogue and cooperation and involving those concerned in a collective process of developing and adopting decisions. The United Nations, particularly the Human Rights Council, should become the driving force behind this process.

6. The Russian Federation initiated, organized and funded the holding of a high-level panel discussion at the thirty-first session of the Human Rights Council, dedicated to the fiftieth anniversary of the adoption of the International Covenants on Human Rights. This event, which was our country's contribution towards strengthening the international system for the promotion and protection of human rights, underscored the historical significance of the Covenants as fundamental and universal international human rights instruments. Russia will continue to provide financial and other necessary assistance to the Office of the United Nations High Commissioner for Human Rights (OHCHR) for the holding of events in Geneva to commemorate the anniversary of the International Covenants.

7. The Russian Federation is convinced that the work of the Human Rights Council should encourage the development of constructive inter State cooperation on human rights protection and promote the strengthening of the international human rights system on the basis of justice and equality of rights, in accordance with the purposes and principles embodied in the Charter of the United Nations. Russia is confident that human rights can help to bring different countries and

groups of countries together and contribute towards improving the climate of trust and mutual respect in international relations.

8. If elected to the Council, Russia will work actively to make it an efficient and effective tool for promoting and protecting human rights throughout the world, and to incorporate in its work the fundamental principles of universality, non-selectivity, objectivity, equal treatment of all categories of human rights and respect for the diversity of cultures and civilizations.

9. Russia engages constructively with OHCHR, making annual contributions of US$ 2 million to its budget. The OHCHR Framework for Cooperation with the Russian Federation continues to be implemented in such areas as ensuring the rule of law, promoting equality and tolerance, and developing a system of education in the human rights field.

10. Considerable attention has been given to cooperation with the system of special procedures of the Human Rights Council. During its membership of the Council, Russia has been visited by a number of special procedures mandate holders, in particular: the Special Rapporteur on contemporary forms of racism, racial discrimination, xenophobia and related intolerance; the Special Rapporteur on the independence of judges and lawyers; the Special Rapporteur on the rights of indigenous peoples; the Special Representative of the Secretary-General on human rights and transnational corporations and other business enterprises; the Special Representative of the Secretary-General on violence against children; and the Special Rapporteur in the field of cultural rights.

11. We respond appropriately to requests from special procedures of the Human Rights Council and seek to provide detailed information on matters of interest to them.

12. Funding for the work of the special procedures is allocated from Russia's voluntary contribution to the OHCHR budget.

13. The Russian Federation actively cooperates with regional human rights institutions and mechanisms, in particular with the Council of Europe, the Organization for Security and Cooperation in Europe and the Council of the Baltic Sea States.

14. The Russian Federation successfully completed the universal periodic review process twice: in 2009 and 2013. Work is currently underway to implement the recommendations of the second cycle of the universal period review, which have been accepted by Russia.

15. The Russian leadership works consistently to improve the law enforcement, judicial and penitentiary systems, to combat corruption and to enhance dialogue between State bodies and civil society. Great significance is attached to developing and strengthening national human rights institutions: the Presidential Council for Civil Society and Human Rights and the High Commissioner for Human Rights in the Russian Federation are viewed as important tools for enhancing the effectiveness of State policy on human rights and ensuring State protection for civil rights and freedoms. Four billion roubles are allocated from the State budget to the social and human rights programs of community-based organizations.

16. Russia places great importance on compliance with its international commitments in the sphere of economic, social and cultural rights, including in

periods of economic and financial crises. A range of measures has been adopted to provide assistance in securing employment and vocational training for different categories of the unemployed and for workers at risk of losing their jobs.

17. Measures continue to be implemented to improve national legislation and law enforcement practices for the advancement of women and the provision of State support for families, motherhood, fatherhood and children. Protecting the rights of the child, as reflected in the 2012-2017 national strategy for children, is a national policy priority. Important objectives include reducing poverty among families with children, ensuring a minimum guaranteed income and providing additional State support to families of children with disabilities. Caring for persons with disabilities and older persons is a permanent feature of our State policy. The aim is to provide them with equal opportunities to other citizens in the exercise of all categories of rights and freedoms. We hope to build on our successful experience in this area in the work of the Human Rights Council.

18. The Russian Government has adopted a series of measures to strengthen the legal framework for protecting the rights of indigenous peoples, to improve law enforcement practice, to develop effective economic mechanisms in this field, to promote indigenous education and to preserve the cultural identities and heritage of indigenous peoples. A significant number of international, nationwide and regional events have been organized.

19. Our country pays considerable attention to sport as an important means of promoting human rights. The unifying power of sport and the affinity between human rights values and the ideals of the Olympic movement can and should be widely harnessed to advance universally recognized human rights standards. We intend to continue promoting this topic within the Human Rights Council, including the issue of creating a barrier-free environment for persons with disabilities.

20. Russia is a party to seven major international human rights instruments: the International Covenant on Civil and Political Rights; the International Covenant on Economic, Social and Cultural Rights; the International Convention on the Elimination of All Forms of Racial Discrimination; the Convention on the Elimination of All Forms of Discrimination against Women; the Convention against Torture and Other Cruel, Inhuman or Degrading Treatment or Punishment; the Convention on the Rights of the Child; and the Convention on the Rights of Persons with Disabilities. Our country submits periodic reports on the implementation of the provisions of the above instruments to the relevant human rights treaty bodies in a timely manner.

21. Thus, in 2015, the Human Rights Committee considered the seventh periodic report of the Russian Federation on implementation of the International Covenant on Civil and Political Rights, and the Committee on the Elimination of Discrimination against Women considered the eighth periodic report of the Russian Federation on implementation of the Convention on the Elimination of All Forms of Discrimination against Women. In 2016, Russia will submit its periodic reports to the Committee on the Elimination of Racial Discrimination, the Committee on Economic, Social and Cultural Rights and the Committee against Torture.

22. In view of the above, we look forward to partners in the General Assembly supporting our re-election to the Human Rights Council for the period 2017-2019.